

SUNSET ON UTAH LAKE

In September 1848, Presidents Young and Kimball brought into the valley of the Great Salt Lake two large companies of Saints from Winter Quarters, making the number of souls in the colony about 5,000. It was now time to put into effect President Young's plan of colonization. In March, 1849, John S. Higbee, who had accompanied Parley P. Pratt on his tour of exploration, was called by President Young to form a settlement on Provo River in Utah Valley, and some thirty families, numbering nearly 150 souls<sup>1</sup> set out under Higbee to found Provo City.

The settlers took with them provisions, seed, implements, and livestock, the last named consisting of a few horses, but mostly oxen and cows. After three days' travel, they arrived at Provo River about March 12, 1849. Three miles from the place where they later built their fort, they were met by the Timpanogos Ute Indians, who were greatly excited by the advance of the whites into the Indian country. The colonists were ordered to stop and were not allowed to advance further until they had entered into a treaty with the Indians. Dimick B.

1. The following are the names of the first settlers of Provo:

John S., Isaac, Charlotte, Hannah Joseph, Emma, Minerva, and Sophia Higbee; John D. Carter; George Day; John, Martha, Merrill, Thomas, Margaret, Wesley, Samuel, John, Luca A., and Joseph Wheeler; John, Julia A., John, Jr., and Elizabeth Blackburn; Dimick B., Lot, Clark, and Clarina Huntington; Samuel, William H., Adeline N., John I., Samuel, Jr., and Anderson S. Ewing; James R., Eliza M., William F., John J., Polly Ann, Elizabeth C., Joseph O., Eliza, Isaac T., Benjamin M., Hyrum S., Richard A., Elizabeth, and Lucenda M. Ivie; William A., Sarah and



Huntington, interpreter, represented the colonists. He was made to raise his right hand and swear by the sun that the whites would not drive the Indians from their lands, nor take away their rights. The colonists forded the river, John Clark being the first to cross the stream, and settled on the south side at the place now known as the Fort field.

The Provo Branch of the Latter-day Saints was organized on the 18th of March, 1849, with John S. Higbee as president and Isaac Higbee and Dimick Huntington as his counselors.

On the third of April settlers commenced building "Fort Utah," located about 40 rods north of Center street, and twenty rods east of the Lake View or lower county road, approximately forty-five rods to the southeast of the wagon bridge across Provo River. It consisted of a stockade, fourteen feet high, with log houses inside, and an elevation in the center called a bastion, on which was placed a cannon commanding the surrounding country. The fort ran east and west, its dimensions being about twenty by forty rods. There were two windows for each room, one to the front, and the

Nancy M. Dayton; Robert and Sarah Egbert; Samuel, Rebecca, Joseph, Riley G., John, Mary, Jane, Ann, Samuel, and Ellen Clark; Miles, Sarah, Franklin E., Christian R. and Franklin E. Jr., Weaver; James, Elizabeth, George W., James A., and Elizabeth Bean; William, Margaret, William B., Harvey A., John A. and Parley P. Pace; Alexander, Isabella, Epsy Jane, Clinton, Nathaniel G., William A., Archibald and Seth Williams; John, Lucinda, Jane, Mary A., Marian and Louisa Park; Chauncey, Hannah F., John W., Harriet M., Julia and Henry N. Turner; R. T. and Mary Ann Thomas; Jabez, Amantha, and Jabez, Jr.

other to the rear. As the settlers had no glass, coarse cloth was used as a substitute in the windows.

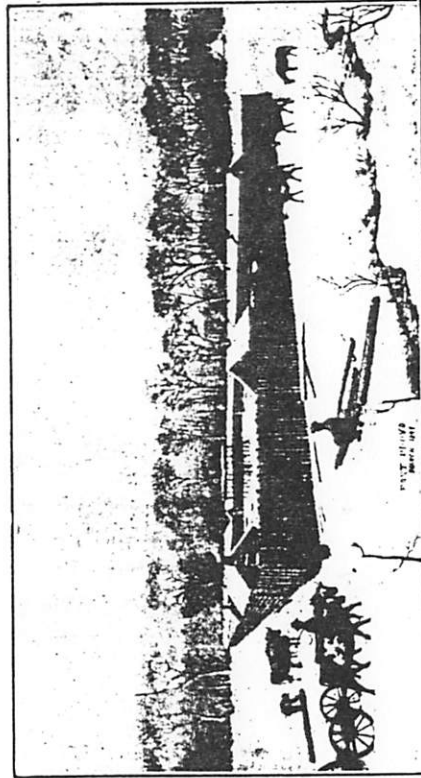
There were gateways at the east and west ends of the fort; and at the southeast corner was a large stockade corral, in which the cattle were kept at night. Within the corral was a guard house. The logs for the fort were obtained from Box Elder Island, a forty acre tract lying between two channels of Provo River, about a mile west of the fort. Boxelder was preferred to cotton-wood as building material on account of its greater durability.

The roadway from the fort crossed the river some rods to the east.

By the middle of May the settlers had 225 acres of land laid out and apportioned to forty families, the colony having increased in number by the arrival of other settlers from Great Salt Lake Valley. The small grain had been sowed, and the principal part of the corn had been planted, but on the 23rd of May there was a severe snow storm, lasting nearly three hours, and on the night following, the frost was so severe that it destroyed the greater part of the vegetation.

Nowland; George, Margaret, Mary and Jeanette Corey; James B., Eliza, Eliza Jr., George and Martha Porter; Thomas, Catherine, Isabelle and Mary Ann Orr; Gilbert, Hannah, Francis, Amos W., William, Albert and Caleb Haws; Walter and Caroline Barney; Thomas and Sarah Willis; Peter, Abram, Charles, Lucinda, Sarah, John and Catherine Cownover; James, Mary and Elisha Goff; Gertham C., Susan, John, Elizabeth and Melinda James; James P. Hiram; Jefferson, Joseph and John Hunt; Chaun-





EXTERIOR VIEW OF FORT UTAH  
(Reproduced from a painting by Samuel Jepperson)

## SETTLEMENT OF PROVO

37

On the 27th of May, it being the Sabbath, the settlers commenced the administration of re-baptism into the church, in conformity with the example set by the parent colony on the arrival of the pioneers in Great Salt Lake Valley, and generally followed in the various colonies founded. This action, of course, was ecclesiastical in its nature, but had a civil function as well. It must be remembered that the whole scheme of colonization had its origin in the Latter-day Saint (Mormon) Church, and that the regular ecclesiastical organizations were made to function in civil capacity in the various settlements until city charters were granted by the Legislature. The re baptism of the Provo settlers, therefore, was not a religious reformation among the people, but an ecclesiastical method of bringing the new colony under perfect organization politically as well as religiously.

On the second of July a mass meeting was held, and, says the "Branch Record", "The following laws were enacted: for the suppression of gambling with the Indians—that a fine of not less than \$25 nor more

cey W., J. E. and Lewis A. West; Henry Rollins; George and Eliza Pickup; Elijah E., Catherine and Sarah Holden.

The foregoing list is given by E. W. Tullidge in his "History of Provo", published in his *Quarterly Magazine*, July, 1884.

John E. Booth in his "History of the Provo Fourth Ward", MS. has the following additional names of first settlers:

(Doc) John R. Stoddard; Shelburn Stoddard; James Mathias; ————Strong; John Orr and family; Houghton and Alpheus Cownover; Henry Zabriskie; Hannah, Emma, Minerva, Clara and Lottie Carter; Jabez Blackburn and family; and Thomas Willis.

than \$100 shall be enforced upon any person found guilty of the same; and to fine persons for shooting in or near the fort, so as to endanger lives thereby." This enactment, an example of government by the will and vote of the people, shows the influence of the New England town meetings, many of the colonists of Utah having come from New England States.

Independence day was celebrated by organizing a company of militia, this act being deemed necessary as a means of protection against the Indians. The company was placed under the command of Major Jefferson Hunt of the Mormon Battalion, and consisted of sixty men, including stalwart youths.

On August 30, a deplorable accident occurred. A hatful of powder having been secured from some emigrants, William Dayton, who had some knowledge of cannons, assisted by George W. Bean, gave a demonstration of the use of the cannon on the bastion. The gun had been fired and was being reloaded, but the gunners had failed to swab out the bore and insure against danger from remaining sparks. Suddenly as the charge was being rammed home, there was an explosion and the men were hurled from the bastion nearly half way to the gate. Dayton was killed and Bean seriously wounded. As there was no physician or surgeon in the colony, it became necessary to send for one. "Hout" Cownover started out at eight o'clock in the evening, soon after the accident occurred, and by hard riding and changing horses on the way, succeeded in bringing Dr. Blake from Centerville to the fort by four

o'clock the next day. He had ridden 120 miles over rough roads in twenty hours, a feat worthy of comparison with the celebrated rides of history. Bean's wounds were dressed and his left forearm amputated between the wrist and the elbow.

Farming was of necessity the principal occupation of the settlers, and was followed by a majority of them. The harvesting of wheat began in July, and was an important event as most of the colonists had had no bread to eat for about four months. Captain Peter W. Cownover has credit for being the first to begin, the date being July 16. He used a cradle that he had brought from Winter Quarters. The next day the grain was bound by hand; and on July 20, Captain Cownover's son, Abram G., threshed several bushels with a flail, the wind serving as a fan to clean it. The following day he took as much as could be carried on horseback to Neff's Mill at Mill Creek, Salt Lake City, a distance of about forty-five miles, and had it ground into flour. He was two days making the trip; and on his return, we may be assured it was not long before bread was baked.

There was a remarkable feature in connection with Captain Cownover's first harvest of grain. About an hour after it had been cut, a heavy rainfall occurred, lasting about two hours. Then it suddenly cleared up, and the sun came out bright and clear. The rain and the sunshine caused the grain to sprout again and a second crop was raised that year, an event that has probably not recurred in the county since that time.



But farming was not the sole industry of importance. Samuel Clark found time to build the first tannery and produce the first leather in the territory, in the fall of 1849. Bark was obtained from pine trees growing in Provo Canyon. As there was no roadway in the canyon, a party of men and boys forced their way through the brush as far as Bridal Veil Falls, taking oxen with them to assist in the work. On account of the ugly mood of the Indians at the time, it was necessary to have well armed advance and rear guards for the trip. Trees were cut and trimmed, and the logs floated down the river. The oxen, sometimes wading and sometimes swimming, were useful in "snaking" the logs across the gravel bars. At the mouth of the canyon the logs were peeled, and the bark was loaded on wagons and hauled to the tannery. As there was no machinery for grinding the bark, a maple log, placed on peg-legs and shaved until the top presented a sharp edge, was used as a block on which to hammer the bark and prepare it for service in tanning.

A long time was required to prepare the leather properly, but the demand for footwear was so great that half-tanned leather was taken from the vats and used in making shoes. The shoes, of course, were not first class, the wet weather making them loose and flabby, and the dry weather causing them to shrink and become hard. But even half-tanned leather was not produced in sufficient quantity to meet the demand, and many pairs of boots and shoes were made from green hides, the hair being placed on the inside. They matched well

with the buckskin trousers frequently worn, and the socks made from old wagon covers.

John Blackburn put into operation the first saw mill in Provo the same year. The mill was a rather primitive affair, but was the means of producing much of the lumber used for the houses and simple furniture of the pioneers. It consisted of a frame work on which logs were placed. Two men operated the saw, one standing on the frame, above the timber, the other below. It was not long before a saw-mill operated by water power was put into operation by Henry Rogers. It, of course, gave more adequate service.

Education of the children was not neglected. Soon after the completion of Fort Utah, Mary Ann Turner, daughter of Chauncey Turner, taught school in one of the little log houses. George W. Bean, after losing his arm, also taught school. He used the house vacated by John S. Higbee, when the latter left the colony and returned to Great Salt Lake City.

There was marriage and giving in marriage in the old fort. Authorities disagree as to who were the first couple to have the ceremony performed. Tullidge gives the honor to R. T. Thomas and Mary Ann Turner, while Booth says it probably belongs to Joseph Clark and Sarah Toppin, who were married October 18, 1849. The marriage of the latter couple is the first to appear on the branch record.

There is the same uncertainty as to the first births. According to Tullidge, the first white child born at Provo was a daughter of Miles Weaver and

his wife, Sarah, and the first male children were William and John Park (twins) sons of John and Louisa Park, December 29, 1849. As G. Oliver Haws, son of Gilbert and Hannah Haws, was born October 8, 1849, Tullidge is evidently in error as to the priority of the twins. Booth tells us, in his characteristic style, that "the first children born, according to the best information obtained, were a daughter to the wife of Jabez Nowlen, and a son to Ed Holden's wife, with the chances that the young lady had the lead."

For some time after the settlement of Provo the Indians were quite friendly. They sometimes visited the fort in large numbers, but made no hostile demonstrations. They were inveterate beggars, however, and often made themselves nuisances. Captain Howard Stansbury, of the United States Army Topographical Engineers, who was conducting a survey of the valley, says of them: "We were no little annoyed by numbers of the latter tribe (Pah Utes), who hung around the camp, crowding around the cook-fires, more like hungry dogs than human beings, eagerly watching for the least scrap that might be thrown away, which they devoured with avidity and without the least preparation. The herdsmen also complained that their cattle were frequently scattered, and that notwithstanding their utmost vigilance, several of them had unaccountably disappeared and were lost. One morning, a fine fat ox came into camp with an arrow buried in his side, which perfectly accounted for the disappearance of the others."

The Indian visitors at the fort would often thrust their brown faces into the windows of the houses, much to the annoyance of the housewives. Sometimes they would peer in at the windows of the little school house, displaying much curiosity at the assemblage of children. Some of the fun loving youngsters hit upon the idea of drawing pictures of the Indians and holding them up to the view of the dusky intruders, who would thereupon scamper away in alarm, much to the enjoyment of the boys and girls. Evidently the Indians feared they were being made the victims of some evil charm or magic.

In September an event occurred that was to have serious consequences. A company of emigrants on their way to the California gold fields camped near Provo. Needing horses, they traded guns and ammunition to the Indians for them, and so supplied the savages with the means of hostilities. The action was to bear fruit early in 1850 in Utah's first Indian war.

The Indians grew less friendly in their behavior, and became bold in their thievery and other depredations. They stole grain from the fields, drove off cattle, and shot arrows at the boys getting wood in the river bottoms. Pitch pineknots were sometimes tied to their arrows, ignited and shot into the fort. They did no damage, however, as the houses were covered with dirt, and could not be fired. But when these blazing arrows were shot into the corral and chanced to light on the back of cattle, there was trouble enough. The piece of sinew holding the knot would burn, letting the arrow fall to the



ground but leaving the flaming knot on the animal's back. A fierce bellowing would ensue, greatly frightening the women and children in the fort.

The settlers endeavored to frighten the Indians by firing the fort cannon, but the savages were not to be awed by sound and smoke.

#### CHAPTER IV

##### PROVO INDIAN WAR; SETTLERS MOVE; SOWIETTE, WHITE MAN'S FRIEND

A fight with the Indians took place on Battle Creek, near the site of Pleasant Grove in the autumn of 1849. Colonel John Scott had been sent south from Great Salt Lake City with thirty or forty men to recover some stolen horses taken from Orr's herd in Utah valley and several cattle stolen from Ezra Benson's herd in Tooele. He encountered the Indians at the place stated above under Chief Kone—also called Roman Nose—and after a sharp skirmish, defeated them, and drove them up Battle Creek Canyon. Five Indians were killed, but none of Colonel Scott's men was hurt.

The authorities at Great Salt Lake City did not altogether approve of this campaign and deplored the bloodshed that had taken place. They were anxious, if possible, to maintain peace with the red men. "It is better to fight the Indians with biscuits than with bullets," was a favorite saying with President Brigham Young.

This battle tended greatly to aggravate the situation at Fort Utah. Whenever the settlers came outside the fort, the Indians would fire on them; the stockade was virtually in a state of siege.